

Staying Healthy in Camp Lemonier

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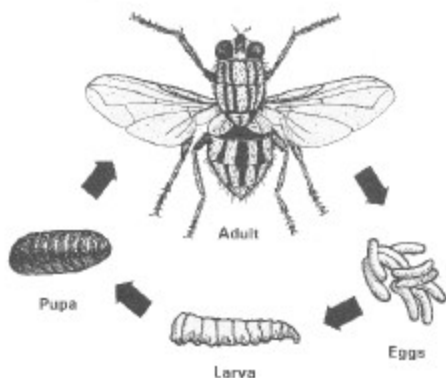
Sharing Our Environment

Aside from the occasional hyena or wild dog, there are other organic nuisances who reside with us here in Camp Lemonier. Insects such as *Musca Domestica*, one of many species of flies collectively known as filth flies, have exponentially increased in number recently. Although fortunately not as prevalent, other native "co-inhabitants" such as mice/rats call Camp Lemonier home. The following explains the importance of camp sanitation and its effect on making Camp Lemonier an unwelcoming home to flies and rodents.

Lord of the Filth Flies

Filth flies have historically had, and continue to have, an impact on combat, peace-time contingency operations, disaster relief operations, and refugee health support operations. They have the capability of spreading pathogens such as dysentery, intestinal worms, and *Escherichia coli*.

The combination of rain and cool weather have attributed to a significant increase in the fly population. Despite the mechanical and chemical methods that are currently in place to control the current fly population boom, the environment (climate and Camp Lemonier's proximity to the local dump) counteracts our pest control program.



Sleeping with Ben

Although the term "rodent" is a taxonomy classification that includes squirrels, mice, rats, and beavers (characterized by their large incisors and need to gnaw), I will use this term in reference to mice and rats only. Despite the relative small number of mice/rats here on camp, these species of rodents still have the potential of multiplying and becoming an infestation. This is one of the main reasons the "don't eat in tent" rule is stressed, due to the fact that small food dribs/crumbs attracts rodents as well as insects. Strict sanitation of all living areas must be adhered to.

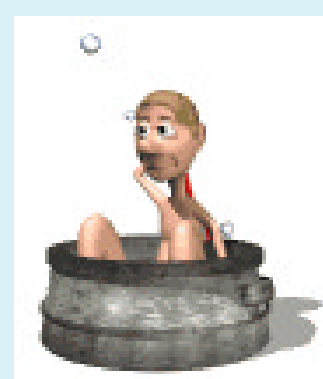
Rodents in general are shy creatures, however, the ones here in Djibouti are typically not as timid as those back in the states and will even take food from one's hand if offered. Some people may even be inclined to make pets of them. Once the animal realizes there is a reliable source of food they will become very comfortable, seek a mate and rapidly multiply. Another side effect becoming so comfortable around people . . . they will eventually start crawling on those who are asleep and nibble on exposed parts such as fingers, toes and tips of noses.

Rodents also love clutter. Many duffel/sea bags and field gear are stored in living areas, making the perfect resting, hiding, and nesting places for rodents. As a result, gear becomes susceptible to damage by the chewing habits of rodents and will also become soiled with urine and feces. Rodents don't care for sudden changes in their environment therefore, it is highly encouraged that during routine cleaning of living spaces the gear is moved and placed neatly in various places every time.

Rodents are infested with fleas, which

are not only a nuisance in themselves but are also known to spread plague. In addition, rodents may also carry the Hantavirus and Leptospirosis, which is spread through their urine and feces.

Discouraging rodents from taking up residence in your living areas will significantly reduce your chances of acquiring these diseases. Once established, infestations are extremely hard if not impossible to conquer. So far there is no known rodent problem on camp but the potential for an infestation exists. Good sanitation is paramount in keeping these pests from invading the camp and living spaces.



Personal Hygiene

Preventing Ringworm of the Scalp

If you are experiencing patches of baldness (aside from being old, stressed, or genetically inherent to hair loss) you could have ringworm of the scalp or *tinea capitis*. Although this skin condition is common in children there have been cases caused by makeshift barber-shops and cutting other people's hair. To maintain a clean, sanitary environment and reduce your chances of having a fungus head, maintain good personal hygiene and refrain from sharing hair clippers.